Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT BOX ELDER SCHOOL DISTRICT August 7, 2007

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Box Elder School District on November 14-15, 2006 and May 23, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, students, and parents, and classroom observations. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from Box Elder School District.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- Box Elder School District developed a district-wide personnel development plan, enabling them to focus on improvements benefiting all students and providing training to the entire district.
- There has been a blending of Special Education, Title I, ELL, and ETI into a cohesive unit to better serve the individual needs of each student.
- Special education staff are dedicated to providing all IDEA rights and services to eligible students.
- Students with disabilities are provided appropriate curriculum delivered by well trained team members, the majority of which are fully certified or participating in the Alternative Teacher Preparation Program through Utah State University.
- A district representative meets with all service agencies on a monthly basis as part of the Local Interagency Council (LIC).
- The Special Education Coordinator meets three times a month with all school principals and district administrators to discuss current issues in special education.
- Special education teaching staff meet with general educators on a regular basis at the school level to discuss student progress and needs for students with disabilities.
- Special education staff provide feedback to the Special Education Coordinator regarding their needs and concerns via surveys and personal visits during the school year.
- Paraprofessionals report being satisfied and feel that they are a contributing partner in their classrooms.
- Teachers appreciate the professional development in literacy and are grateful for the additional literacy support provided by special education staff.
- Professional development by local, regional, statewide, and national trainers are routinely attended by Box Elder Special Education teachers and district staff.
- Twenty-two teachers and related service providers have attended and graduated from the Utah Mentor Teacher Academy.
- Files were stored in locking cabinets with file authorizations on the outside of cabinets, following Box Elder School District confidentiality procedures.
- Teachers, both special education and general education, know the procedures to access special education files.
- Principals at each school site visited were directly involved in special education processes.
- Special education teachers reported feeling supported by district personnel, documented by teacher interviews.

- Special education teachers reported considering parent input during evaluation/eligibility and IEP meetings. This was documented by teacher interviews and parent signatures on forms in special education files.
- Special education staff reported multiple opportunities for staff development; special education teachers are also included with general education teacher training district-wide.
- Special education teachers were able to voice knowledge about Utah special education procedures and rules.
- Evidence of good paraeducator support was observed in classrooms. Paraeducators were provided with multiple training opportunities within the district.
- A structured, systematic file organization was used consistently throughout the district.
- The Box Elder School District Superintendent supports the use of appropriate programs whenever possible to keep all students in school, rather than to use suspension or expulsion.
- Box Elder School District uses some special education funds to support K-3 literacy program for all students; the K-3 literacy program involves data collection and multi-year tracking of student progress to determine program effectiveness.
- Professional development planning is based on data, as reported in interviews.
- Ongoing collaboration at the district level between assessment and special education results in utilization of
 data to make curriculum and instructional decisions at the school and classroom level.
- Professional development is delivered by district special education staff to all special education teachers, all new teachers, paraeducators and bus drivers at least annually.
- Box Elder School District provides additional district-level technical assistance at elementary and secondary schools through mentoring, attendance at IEP and eligibility meetings, teacher observations and support.
- Math CRT trend lines show ongoing improvement in scores for students with disabilities from 2003-2006, with an overall increase in 2003 from 35.76% to 50.39% in 2006.

Parent Involvement

- The Box Elder SD Behavior Specialist and a psychologist meet when appropriate with classroom staff, parents, and agencies to discuss student progress and needs.
- Parents are pleased with the services being provided and appreciate the teachers who they feel go above and beyond in supporting their students.
- Parents are provided with tips during SEOPs and IEPs on how to help their children at home with homework and behavior, as needed.
- Files contained evidence of copies of forms in parent's primary home language and documentation of interpreters provided, as appropriate.
- Parent signatures present in files on IEPs, consent forms, and Eligibility Determinations.
- Notices of Meeting for IEP meetings evident in files.
- Special education teachers, general education teachers, and administrators identified parents as an integral part of the IEP process, as stated in interviews, focus groups and documentation found in special education files.
- Parent contact logs were consistently present in preschool files.
- Special education teachers report using daily home notes to communicate with parents.
- Special education teachers and related service providers were generally able to state at least five of the Procedural Safeguards.
- Two parents attended and participated in the parent focus group.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Box Elder School District has seen great improvements in student behavior by setting up peer buddies in the elementary settings and peer tutors in secondary settings.
- District special education personnel attend IEP meetings when requested by the school or parents. District special education staff attend all IEP meetings for all new teachers during the first year of employment.
- Special education teaching staff are very motivated and knowledgeable.
- All special education files are reviewed annually by the district's file compliance specialist. Teachers
 receive a summary sheet indicating areas of noncompliance and ongoing issues are followed up on by
 technical assistants and principals.
- Teachers utilize ongoing assessment and formal assessment data in order to improve student success.
- Box Elder School District provides a continuum of service delivery options.

- Teachers are willing to teach remediation classes (based upon UBSCT and CRT) before, during, and after school and have met as committees to focus on curriculum goals. Scope and sequence developed based upon core curriculum for special education math classes at the elementary and secondary level.
- Instruction is focused on student needs, based upon data review from ongoing progress monitoring. District progress monitoring team collects data three times a year.
- School nurses actively and energetically collaborate with special education staff and general education staff by attending meetings, writing health care plans, and working within classrooms to provide staff training and services.
- Students with disabilities are included in the general education environment, including after school and extra-curricular activities with accommodations as appropriate.
- Evidence of strong behavioral supports throughout district. Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) present and complete in files, along with supporting data.
- Evidence of positive behavioral supports and opportunities for positive peer participation were seen throughout the elementary schools visited in Box Elder School District.
- Files contained measurable goals based on Utah Core Standards.
- Classrooms designed to address behavioral needs for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers are available at the secondary level.
- Evidence of level systems in all schools, which are used when appropriate and designed to adapt and change to meet student individual needs.

Transitions

- Box Elder School District's Community Transition Council meets monthly to discuss student needs
 combining educational and community goals. This includes functional teachers, team leaders and other
 community agencies. It also usually includes parents.
- Students transitioning from Part C receive special education services by their third birthday.
- There has been coordination with the Applied Technology College to define pre-skills and entry level competencies to ensure more successful entrance into post-school programs.
- Utah Preschool Outcomes Data (UPOD) form present in special education files.
- Box Elder School District has independently developed and disseminated a form to compile their UPOD
 data
- Part C was invited to and attended all IEP meetings.
- Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) were present in all files.
- District representative attended transition meetings.
- Transition forms present in files for students of transition age.
- Box Elder School District participates in the Local Interagency Council (LIC) to facilitate interagency interaction.
- Box Elder School District has developed a list of competencies designed to promote student success at Bridgerland ATC.

Disproportionality

- Box Elder SD eligibility process attempts to ensure that over-identification does not occur.
- There is not a disproportionate representation of any minority group in special education.
- Prevalence rates of race/ethnicity and disability categories are consistent with district enrollment and state averages.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ Pre-referral interventions implementation prior to referral not documented
- ✓ Evaluation Timelines: Initial evaluations not completed within 60 days of receipt of parent consent; Reevaluation timelines exceeded.
- ✓ Evaluation & Eligibility: Reevaluations did not document Review of Existing Data; Students were not assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability and sufficiently comprehensive to identify needs; Evaluation results were not summarized; Regular education teacher did not participate in eligibility determinations; Students do not meet the eligibility criteria of one of the disability categories (ED, ID, SLD).

For ID disability categories: intellectual, academic, and adaptive assessment results did not demonstrate consistently low profiles across measures and, if verbal or performance scores were significantly discrepant, further evaluations were not conducted to determine the reason.

For SLD disability categories: an observation of the student's academic performance in the general classroom setting was not documented; each identified deficit was not documented by at least 2 measures of achievement; The team did not prepare an evaluation report of the results of the evaluation which includes the relevant behavior noted during the observation or include a description of the instructional environment in which the observation took place.

- ✓ Prior Written Notice for evaluation/reevaluation not documented.
- ✓ Notice of Meetings for Eligibility, IEP, and Placement missing.
- ✓ IEP Team Membership did not include the participation of a general education teacher.
- ✓ IEP Content: IEPs did not contain complete Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements which included baseline data or addressed how the disability affects progress/involvement in the general curriculum; IEP did not contain specific special education services; IEP did not address how the student will participate in statewide assessment.
- ✓ Timelines: IEPs not reviewed and revised at least annually; Placement not reviewed annually.
- ✓ School to Post School Transition: Transition plans did not contain a course of study needed to assist the student in reaching long-range post-secondary outcomes and parents and students were not informed of their Majority Rights at least 1 year before the student's 18th birthday.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.